

FLAGGING: PM Presser on Illegal Trucker Blockades and on the Situation in Ukraine

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Date: Fri, 11 Feb 2022 20:06:45 +0000

Hello Pat,

Here is the PM presser in its only English version.
A bilingual version will be sent later.

Regards,

Gabriel Roy
(He/Him - Il/Lui)

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2022-02-11
Time / Heure: 14h10
Network / Chaîne: CBC-NN, CTV-N, RDI
With / Avec: PM Justin Trudeau
Topics Discussed / Sujets Discutés: Trucker Convoys, Russia-Ukraine

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] Our -- I would like to talk about the border blockades and my meeting with president Biden and other allies. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: They are endangering jobs and public safety. The blockades are hurting small businesses and neighbourhoods. They're impacting trade, supply chains, and manufacturing. The people in these blockades are hurting our everyday families, farmers, truckers, and blue collared Canadians. This morning I spoke with David Cassidy of for who told me how badly this is hurting workers in southern Ontario. We both agree that blockades are unacceptable and they have to end for the good of all Canadians. [Speaking French].

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] Yesterday, I convened the incident cooperation group with premiers and other officials. We are going to try to work the provinces and territories and cities to put an end to the blockade. I also spoken with the other party leaders and I emphasize the fact that all leaders and all parties must denounce them. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: To offer the full and continued support of the federal government. The ministers are also in regular contact with their counterparts. Ontario's announcement this morning is responsible and necessary. We will continue to work alongside all partners to get the situation under control. This morning I had a direct call with president Biden to talk about our shared challenges at the border. I updated him on the situation, particularly in Windsor. We discussed the American and indeed the global influences on the protest. We talked about the U.S. Based flooding of the 9-1-1 phone lines in Ottawa, the presence of U.S. Citizens in the blockade, and the impact to foreign money to fund this illegal activity. President Biden and I both agreed that for the security of the people and the economy, these blockades cannot continue. So make no mistake, the border cannot and will not remain closed. I want to remind everyone that politicians don't direct police in a democratic society, but I can assure you that the RCMP is working with provincial and local police departments to enforce the law. Everything is on the table because this unlawful activity has to end and it will end. Of course, I can't say too much more now as to when or how this ends because unfortunately we are concerned about violence. So we're taking every precaution to keep people safe. The absolute safest way for this to end is for everyone to return to your communities now. If you're still participating in illegal blockades, you're hurting your Neighbours. It's time to go home, especially if you have kids with you. [Speaking French].

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] Over the past weeks, we had observed that funding has been supplied to support the blockades. It's important to understand that this money should not be supporting unlawful activities. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: That ensure funds cannot be used for criminal or illegal activity and these blockades are illegal. Canadian banks are monitoring financial activity very closely and taking action as necessary. I want to make something very clear. The illegal blockades seeking to take our neighbourhoods and our economy hostage and the collective COVID fatigue we're facing are two very separate things. If you join the protest because you are tired of COVID, you now need to understand that you are breaking laws. The consequences are becoming more and more severe. You don't want to end up losing your licence, end up with a criminal record, which will impact your job, your livelihood, and even your ability to travel internationally, including the U.S. We heard your frustration with COVID, with the measures that are there to keep people safe. We heard you. It's time to go home now. To the people that are tired of this pandemic, that is all Canadians, I want you to be able to get back to the things that you love. I hear you, all of Yo. Parliamentarians, we all hear it from friends and family. Here in honrd Ontario, she disagrees with the blockaders, but she is also tired of the restrictions. Helen from Toronto, who is worried about what the restrictions are doing to children's mental health. I understand, we don't want these measures to last longer than they should and we never did. Because of all of our efforts, we saved more lives in Canada than many other countries. We helped people like Samuel, who also wrote to tell me that as a healthcare worker, our measures are keeping him safe. [Speaking French].

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] It's because we work together and we're vaccinated that we recovered more than 1 million jobs. We ask people to get vaccinated, precisely because we want to avoid isolation and lockdowns. Looking forward, we will work together with public health officials and we will follow the best scientific advice to keep people safe and protect healthcare workers. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: Everyday we consider and reconsider what is best to protect Canadians. I have multiple meetings every week to talk about what the next steps are. This morning I spoke with Dr. Tam and minister duclos about the plan to adjust travel measures under federal jurisdiction. As Canadians, it's important to continue being there for one another. We're fighting a virus, we're not fighting each other. People are making sacrifices and have been for the past two years. It's never the

time to hurt our economy or Canadians with the illegal-- blockade, especially not now after all the things we have done to get back to the things we love and reopen our lives. [Speaking French].

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] I would also like to speak about the situation in Ukraine. We're continuing to work closely with president Biden and our allies. This morning, there was a virtual summit to discuss our diplomatic efforts, our economic and military efforts. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: We discussed the importance of finding a peaceful solution. That remains our focus. We're all concerned that Russia is continuing to build up its true presence and looking actively for excuses to act. Instead, Russia must deescalate. The west is standing firm together, coordinated, and ready to impose severe costs, including sanctions if Russia invades Ukraine once again. We're giving our support to nato and we will continue to support Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty, and Independence and more than anything else, continue to support the people of Ukraine. This is an evolving situation, but the bottom line is this. We're not seeking confrontation with Russia, but we're resolved to stand firm with the Ukrainian people's right to determine their own future. Merci -- thank you.

Moderator: Now we will begin with 20 minutes of questions, 10 minutes from the room, 10 minutes by the phone. [Speaking French]. [Voice of Translator] We will begin with questions, 10 minutes in the room and 10 minutes over the telephone. First question. [End of Translation]

Reporter: Hello prime minister, Canadian press. Only now is the Canadian government taking concrete steps. Now your government has simply said you will provide resources when asked. Why has it taken two weeks, 15 days for any government anywhere to do something directly to address this crisis now?

Prime Minister Trudeau: From the very beginning we have been supporting the Ottawa police force and the province of Ontario with any resources they need to keep public order, to ensure that they're able to move forward on ending these blockades. I think the citizens of Ottawa, indeed all Canadians are impatient for it to be done, for people to go home. The message has been clear, people have been heard in this country. Jurisdictions work together to ensure the outcome for its citizens. The federal government has been there with resources, with support, with guidance, and engagement that is getting us through this one step at a time.

Reporter: [Voice of Translator] Radio Canada, you say all options are on the table. Does this mean that the army is a possibility? At what moment in the situation might it be necessary to call them in?

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] We know that in this kind of demonstration, we know that the best solution to unlawful blockades is that people decide for themselves that they have been heard, that they expressed their frustrations and disagreements and now it's time to go home. That's the message we've been sending for some time but now there will be real consequences, with respect to their licences, their futures, their jobs. If they are arrested, illegal blockades and these are people that we hope will decide to go home, otherwise there will be a more -- an increasingly robust police intervention. We will respond to the situation in a proportionate way. The police must use the means that they need, step by step to intervene. We have clearly said this blockade in the city of Ottawa, this blockade of our economy that is hurting Canadians countrywide, Canadians who have been impacted by these blockades, this conflict must end. [End of Translation]

Reporter: Prime minister, I know you don't like to talk about your father's legacy but he faced some similar decisions. You said everything is on the table. Could you explain to what extent military is being considered? Also, how much of your father's experience back then colour your own reaction to the decision you have to make.

Prime Minister Trudeau: As I said many times, my values are deeply informed by the way I was brought up and my experience as a Canadian. That's what every politician brings to bear, the core

values they stand for. Every situation is different. What we're seeing is that people who are frustrated, deeply by this unprecedented global pandemic that has been hitting Canadians so hard over these past two years, leaving people tired, frustrated, angry, wanting it to be done. Unfortunately we know this pandemic doesn't end because we cross our arms and decide that it's over. This pandemic will end by following science, by supporting each other, by being there for each other as Canadians have done throughout these past two years. As a government, we made a promise to have people's backs every step of the way. That means doing the things that keep people safe and supported and get our economy to come roaring back as quickly as possible for everyone. That's why these blockades that are not helping this pandemic end any sooner, that is hurting our supply chains, hurting families across the country, endangering our recovery both from the health crisis and from the economic crisis, are so wrong. That's why we are going to continue to use the tools that we have as a society to ensure that these blockades end and that starts with local police forces having the support of orders of government, of national police resources. That's how we are getting through this process.

Reporter: [Voice of Translator] Premier Ford has a plan. Do you think his plan is sufficient because the governor of Michigan is asking for federal help.

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] Well, the federal government has deployed help. The federal government is present on the ground with the RCMP, who are supporting local and provincial police. We are directly engaged as a federal government in resolving the problem. We're ready to work with our partners in other jurisdictions, making sure that things end quickly and well. [End of Translation]

Reporter: There is an outstanding request for 1800 officers that hasn't been filled. Talking with mayors and premiers, is that supposed to provide comfort to businesses, to auto workers who are laid off because the ambassador bridge is closed?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: We have provided hundreds of police officers to jurisdictions that need them, including Ottawa. The request for 1,600 officers was carefully examined by what the O.P.P. And experts within the RCMP leadership to look at what exactly the plan is, what is exactly needed and what is needed is being provided to be able to move through this in a peaceful, responsible way. Again, the best way to resolve this, the best way to stop hurting Canadian citizens, hard working Canadians across this country is for the people in these protests to understand that they have been heard, and it's time to go home. It's time to bring your kids home from this protest. It's now an in legal protest and the consequences on them and on their families will be significant, if they choose to continue with this illegal activity.

Reporter: [Voice of Translator] Are you saying that you will not deploy the army?

Prime Minister Trudeau: [Voice of Translator] Well, I've always been extremely clear. We never want to deploy the army against Canadian citizens. We have to avoid this at any price. This would be a solution in extremist. It would be our last recourse. We have to be ready for anything, but before going forward with that kind of idea and calling in the army, there are so many other steps that we can have recourse to. We're not there yet, far from it. [End of Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau: Let me be clear. Using military forces against civilian populations in Canada or in any other democracy is something to avoid having to do at all costs. That's why the solution right now is focused on police forces, enforcing the laws that exist, protecting public order in the way that they are trained to do in a predictable, Progressive approach that doesn't skip any steps and works to find a solution peacefully. That's why now it's become a lot more difficult and impact. And quite frankly expensive for people in those protests because they're tired of COVID to continue to be part of these illegal protests. The consequences on their lives for choosing to continue to endanger the lives of Canadians, to violate our laws, are going to be more and more extensive and therefore we are very hopeful that people will choose to leave these protests peacefully now that they have been heard. There are further steps for law enforcement to take as that happens or not but we're a long

way from ever having to call in the military. though of course, we have to be ready for any eventuality, but it is not something we are seriously contemplating at this time.

Reporter: Prime minister, I'm wondering if you have any regrets to the approach to the protesters. Do you think it helped or do you think it angered them and they felt misunderstood and caused the protesters to dig in.

Prime Minister Trudeau: I think there were a lot of Canadians scratching their heads at the fact that protesters that spoke for truckers didn't represent the 90% of truckers who are vaccinated. Where they struck a cord with a lot of Canadians is they're tired of COVID and tired of restrictions. As a government, we made a promise to Canadians to have their backs every step of the way for as long as it takes. Part of having people's backs is making sure that the public health measures we bring in, the supports for Canadians, the supports for provinces that bring in restrictions, these are the things that get us through this pandemic. These are the things that save lives and we are going to continue to follow the science and do what is necessary to keep Canadians safe. Quite frankly, Canadians stepped up. 90% of Canadians got vaccinated. People have been there for each other. They're united in wanting to be there for each other. They're united in being sick and tired of this pandemic. Those two things can be true and are true and our responsibility as orders of government is to continue to be there for them every step of the way.

Reporter: [Voice of Translator] Prime minister, how do you feel about the fact that the eyes of the world are on you in a situation that hasn't changed in two weeks?

Prime Minister Trudeau: Well, I talked to president Biden this morning and the fact that these protests in Cana are related to a reality around the world where people are frustrated, not only with the pandemic, but with restrictions and government, which has protected them. Unfortunately what we're seeing are links with americans and others across the world who are trying to undermine people's trust in their institutions, in their de democracies, in their fellow citizens. We must continue to be present, to protect our fellow citizens. At the beginning of the pandemic, I promised Canadians we would be there for them and get them what they needed, when they needed it. We will continue to be there for them. [End of Translation]

Reporter: Hi prime minister Trudeau. Provinces are lifting vaccine passports and your government is moving to lift the P.C.R. Testing around travel. Are you concerned that the protesters will claim victory for these changes and this will embolden them further?

Prime Minister Trudeau: Different provinces are taking decisions that they believe are appropriate to them. As you know, the federal government has responsibility over the borders, over international travel and over the federal public service. As I said, we had extensive meetings on the next steps we look forward to taking and we will be making announcements regarding our border posture next week.

Reporter: Are you concerned that protesters could claim victory and embolden them further?

Prime Minister Trudeau: All the decisions we take will be based on science and indeed will be focused on Canadians getting their lives back to normal. I can emphasize that many of the measures that we've been talking about for a long time, for example, the measures that the Canadian government brought in on needing to be vaccinated to get on a plane or train, or needing to work in the federal or public service are not things we are considering changing. We're looking at the posture to ensure that people are able to get back to the things they love as this omicron wave begins to recede.

Reporter: Hi. Prime minister, you said that the steps that the province is taking now are necessary, but why has it taken so long?

Prime Minister Trudeau: Sorry, you were cutting in and out, can you repeat the end of the question?

Reporter: It takes so long, would this thing only coordinated because of the border blockade? did that tactic work?

Prime Minister Trudeau: Obviously the concern we're facing on the border is significant. Six auto plants had to shut down because of lack of parts flowing across the ambassador bridge in Windsor. We're seeing supply shortages because of the Koontz border. These are things we've been taking seriously. We've been taking the situation seriously from the beginning, working with partners to put an end to these peacefully and responsibly. That's the job of police officers and police forces. The responsibility of politicians is to ensure the police forces have the tools and resources they need. That's what we've been doing. We do not direct the local police, even when they're in proximity to an international border crossing. We all work together and regardless of the conversations going on between jurisdictions, I can assure you that on the ground, the actual cohesion and alignment with all different police forces, federal, provincial, and municipal have been exemplary.

Reporter: What did president Biden tell you about the U.S. Influence or participation in Canadian protests? How will you cut off any foreign funding?

Prime Minister Trudeau: Obviously president Biden expressed his concerns for the well-being of Canadians and indeed for the jobs and economic ties that flow back and forth across our borders every single day. He expressed concern not just for the impacts right now, but the indication that there is international support from the United States and elsewhere and the world. We have seen the attack on the Ottawa 9-1-1 system came from the United States. We see that almost half of the funding through certain portals that is flowing to the barricaders here in Canada is coming from the United States. We see a mobilization of more of the calling elements around support for these blockades that are hurting citizens. We are going to continue to work together as we have been on resolving this situation, but also on strengthening our institutions and our democratic principles.

Reporter: Good afternoon. Prime minister, can you please provide more details about the percentage of the funds that the federal government believes is coming from the U.S.? What percentage of the people in the crowds are actually american?

Prime Minister Trudeau: On certain platforms, the number of U.S. Donations is approaching 50%. We can make sure that we ensure that the information is shared with you on that. In terms of the presence of Americans in our protests, I can assure you that our police services are monitoring carefully and watching and coordinating with partner agencies around the world.

Reporter: Thank you, and the U.S. Has offered support to the federal government. Has the federal government accepted that support and what specifically is it?

Prime Minister Trudeau: I don't want to get into operational details but I can assure you that the conversation directly between governor Whitmer of Michigan and our officials and indeed with the white house have ensured us resources and support if necessary and the folks on the ground are working out what is necessary and what could be used as we move forward.

Reporter: Good afternoon prime minister. A military option is the last resort. You are still pleading with them to go home. These protesters made it clear, they're not leaving, they are not listening to you. They don't have interest in what you have to say. What comes next? What's the next part of the federal solution, given how overwhelmed the city of Ottawa is.

Prime Minister Trudeau: First of all, I don't accept the contention that the city of Ottawa has exhausted their tools and resources. The Ottawa police force has been given resources from the O.P.P. And the RCMP. There is concerted effort around planning and approaching that will move forward in a proportional way, but I think it is very clear that the time for these protests to end has come. People who are there because they are tired of COVID restrictions. We understand that. Everyone is tired of COVID restrictions. We need to make sure that our laws are followed in this country and our laws are

enforced. That's the role of the Ottawa police force. That's the role of police jurisdiction across this country and they will, as the premier indicated today, they will be enforcing stronger and stronger measures that will make it more and more difficult for the protesters to, in good conscious, choose to stay part of illegal protests.

Reporter: Prime minister, you said a more aggressive enforcement is off the table because of the threats of violence. People are worried. There is concern that weapons are present. Do you have visibility on that? Do you have any indication of exactly what elements are in that crowd and what potential for violence there actually is?

Prime Minister Trudeau: I can assure you I have been briefed regularly by both our intelligence agencies and police agencies on the risk levels to civilians, including protesters and vulnerable people within the protest there are people who are there with their kids in these protests. Their wellbeing is top of mind for police services and citizens around the protest as well, trying to go about their daily lives. There is always a concern around escalation, but the police have a robust framework in which they go step by step on making it more and more difficult for the protests to continue, more expensive for people to choose to stay in the protest and the impacts on their lives and livelihood. It's time for the protesters to go home. It's time to recognize that this protest, this blockade is illegal. The consequences on people choosing to remain will be increasingly challenging. The police have the tools to move forward in a step by step approach that will bring back order to the city of Ottawa and indeed to our border crossings.

Moderator: Thank you, that ends the press conference.

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Subject: RE: PM presser at 2 today

It will be live on CPAC (and I imagine all other networks) if that helps!

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Subject: RE: PM presser at 2 today

Hi Pat,
It depends if we can capture it via our tool (if it's live on TV) or if we have to order it.

We get bilingual version hours later from PCO but I understand WSHDC needs it asap...

C.

From: Skinner, Patricia -LCBR <Patricia.Skinner@international.gc.ca>
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Subject: PM presser at 2 today

Hi,
How soon after the PM's presser at 2pm today do you think you will have a transcript? WSHDC is anxious to see it so I wanted to give them a sense on when we might be able to send it.

thanks

Patricia Skinner

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